

**Testimony in Support of HB 157 revising the Children's Health Insurance Program**

Children with risk factors such as high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes and high cholesterol levels already show signs of fatty build-up in their arteries that could lead to heart attack in adulthood, researchers reported at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2006.

"Primary prevention of heart disease must start in childhood," said Sanaz Piran, M.D., internal medicine resident at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. "We need to start looking at and treating risk factors for heart disease in children."

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the transition from childhood to adulthood, adolescents establish patterns of behavior and make choices that affect both their current and future health. Adolescents and young adults are adversely affected by serious health and safety issues such as congenital diseases never treated due to a lack of insurance. They also struggle to adapt behaviors that could decrease their risk of developing chronic diseases in adulthood—behaviors such as eating nutritiously, engaging in physical activity, and choosing not to use tobacco. Environmental factors such as family, peer group, school, and community characteristics also contribute to the challenges that adolescents face.

To have the most positive impact on our children's health, all of us, that is community organizations, schools, government agencies, and other community members must work together in a comprehensive approach, providing all of our children, regardless of the income of their parents, comprehensive health insurance like CHIP, safe and nurturing environments for our nation's youth can ensure that adolescents will be healthy and productive members of society.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee today.

**Cliff Christian, Governmental Affairs Director**